

## NATIVE PRAIRIE

Native prairie in Lancaster County refers to tallgrass prairie that is dominated by big bluestem, little bluestem, indiagrass, and sideoats grama grass species. Numerous wildflowers and forbs are also found in these prairies, including purple coneflower, purple prairie clover, and black-eyed susan.



### IMPORTANCE:

- Native prairie is the historical pre-European landscape matrix in Lancaster County
- Native prairies in Lancaster County are rare and exhibit increased value
- Native prairies assist in enhancing water quality
- Native prairies assist in enhancing soil stability
- Native prairies assist in enhancing water infiltration
- Native prairies can assist to rebuild damaged soils
- Native prairies provide habitat for threatened and endangered species
- Native tall grass prairies have assisted in defining our natural and cultural heritage
- The physical size and mass characteristics inherent to native prairies provide a complimentary contrast with the linear character of riparian areas and stream corridors
- The customary upland locations of prairie areas create good views
- Prairies define the natural Nebraska landscape
- Native prairies provide educational value regarding natural history and cultural references

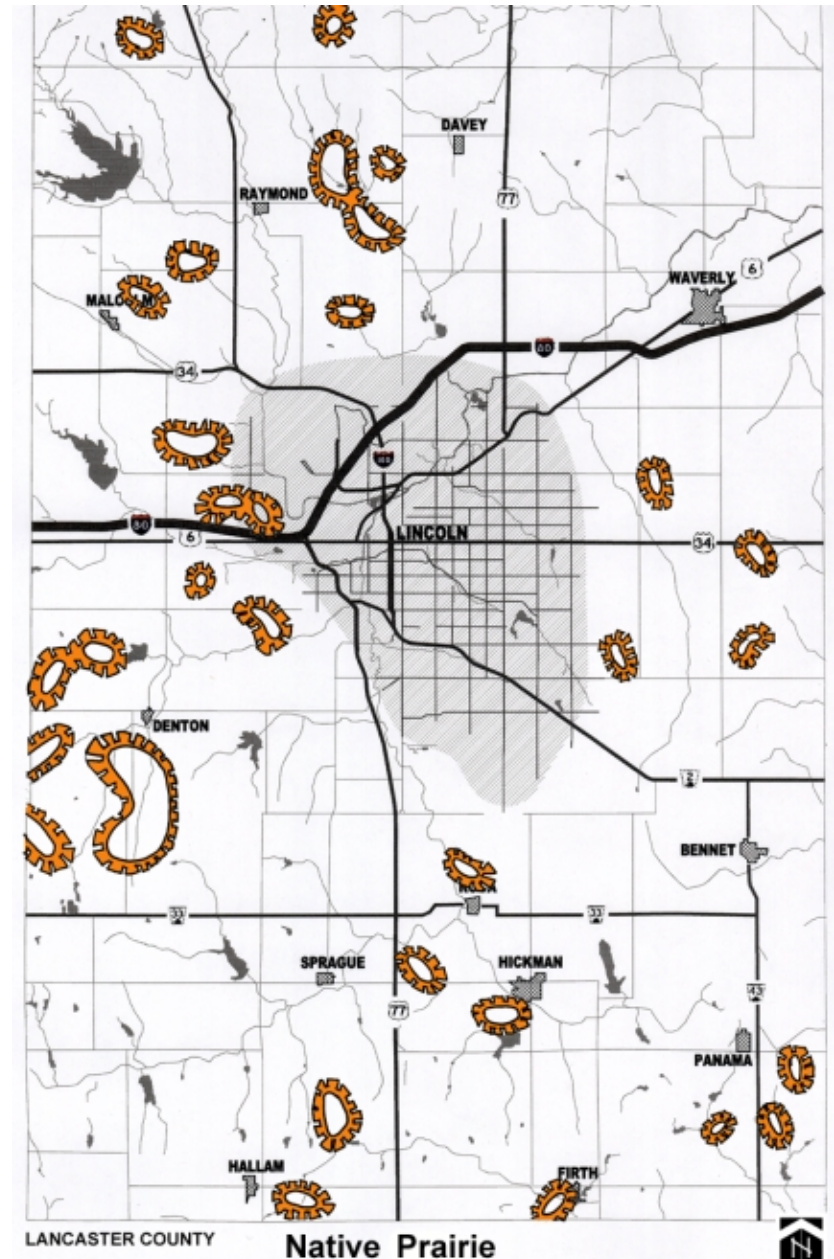
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## LEGEND



**NATIVE PRAIRIE**



### HUMAN IMPACT/THREAT:

- Farming, acreage development and other urbanization degrades the spatial quality and increases fragmentation of native prairies
- Farming, acreage development and other urbanization degrades the ability to effectively manage native prairies
- Large, contiguous areas of native prairies are necessary to sustain its unique character and visual quality
- Fragmentation of native prairies decreases their ecosystem integrity
- It is often difficult to convince others of the need to preserve native prairies
- Invasive species degrade native prairies
- Prairies are often the most developable land available and therefore most vulnerable



### PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

- Native prairies are “chunky” in character and occupy large areas or patches of land that must remain unbroken in order to maintain their integrity
- Remnants of native prairies that are to remain healthy require large areas of square shaped or circular shaped land (these area shapes reduce the length of edge perimeter and simulate more closely the natural prairie condition)
- Preservation of native prairie is desirable
- Many of our cultural and historical community values are tied to the prairie
- Restoration of native prairie is desirable
- Identification and development of compatible grassland uses in association with native prairies are required
- The University of Nebraska Center for Grassland Studies should be utilized as a resource in the integration of native prairies in the Lancaster County planning/development processes
- Management of native prairies requires the implementation of ¼ to ½ mile wide smoke buffers to accommodate periodic fire